

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey No. B-4317

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

16 N. Howard Street

historic

Berman's Diamonds

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 16 N. Howard Street

☐ not for publication

city, town Baltimore

☐ vicinity of

congressional district

Seventh

state Maryland

county Baltimore

3. Classification

Category

☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both
Public Acquisition
☐ in process
☐ being considered
☒ not applicable

Status

☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress
Accessible
☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☒ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military
☐ museum
☐ park
☐ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Aaron and Lillie Strauss Foundation Inc.

street & number 6301 Stevens Forest Road

telephone no.:

MD 21045

city, town Columbia

state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse

MLP9198

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street, Room 610

lib₂₉

city, town Baltimore

MD folio

state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town

state

28

7. Description

Survey No. B-4317

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Resource Count: 1

This circa 1910 commercial building faces east on N. Howard Street and abuts a partywall structure to the north and a parking lot to the south. The enframed window wall design is one bay wide and three stories high. The steep shed roof slopes down to two stories along the back (west) wall. The street frontage is 15' and the depth is 105'2".

The first story has been substantially altered circa 1940 into a glass curtain wall with a deeply recessed entrance along the north wall. The interior of the recessed vestibule is covered with mock wood siding. Fluted aluminum siding covers the enframing wall. The display window is divided by metal mutins into three large plates. A fabric awning runs across the facade. A roll-down theft guard is suspended over the first story. A boxed plastic signboard stretches the width of the building, up to the second-story windows.

The second and third stories have tan-painted, brick piers running up the building's edges. The second-story window is a tripartite Chicago window of a large fixed central sash flanked by 1/1 moveable sash. The spandrels are also divided into three panels. The recessed fields of the spandrels are set off by the brown paint on the back bands. A metal string course runs between the second and third story windows. It is composed of fillets and ogee trim. The third story windows are blocked by two large panels painted tan with raised back bands painted brown.

The parapet wall is bisected by a projecting metal cornice of fillet, ogee, bead and back band. Below the cornice is a stucco panel painted tan with brown ends. Above the cornice is a wide outline of a rectangle painted in brown with a tan recessed field.

The south wall is blank and parged.

The west wall faces an alley. It is two bays wide and two stories high. There is a window in the first bay and a door in the second. The second story is partially blocked by a sign in the first bay. There is a 1/1 sash window in the second bay.

The interior of the store is covered in a mock wood siding similar to that in the vestibule and has an acoustical tile ceiling.

8. Significance

Survey No. B-4317

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates circa 1910 Builder/Architect unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The architectural design of this three-story, one-bay building is an example of a relatively inexpensive, circa 1910, enframed window wall commercial building. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth writes that the enframed window wall design was "most commonly used for retail stores" and that the design "reflects an effort to give greater order to the facade composition of small and moderate-sized commercial buildings."¹ The tripartite windows in the window wall are indicative of the commercial usage of the upper stories as well as the first story.

This particular example of an enframed window wall building is a plain version that lacks the detailed cast iron spandrels that often enrich the inset window walls. Instead, this building shows what can be done creatively with paint to compensate for the absence of more costly embellishments. The building is one of the simpler versions of the enframed window wall designs found in the commercial district, which is puzzling in light of the economic hierarchy of lower N. Howard Street.

The three-story height and narrow street frontage of this commercial building reveals the changing commercial nature of the unit block of N. Howard Street. Unlike the nineteenth century, when the neighborhood was used for combination commercial/light manufacturing businesses, during the twentieth century the manufacturing component began to move elsewhere. This building is a transitional one: the upper stories were used for the traditional commercial/light manufacturing usage, but not on the scale of the earlier period's buildings. Nonetheless, the narrow width indicates a competition for economically valuable (and hence expensive) street frontage. The resulting three-story design of the building adequately fulfilled the limited commercial needs of the occupants and provided the financial return needed on the property.

¹ Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street, pp. 69, 68.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1987).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quad

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane Shaworganization C.H.A.P., Room 1037 date August 12, 1991street & number 417 E. Fayette Street telephone (301) 396-4866city or town Baltimore state MD

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
301-514-7600

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATAHISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization:
Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period:
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Historic Period Themes:
Architecture
Economics

Resource Type:
Building

Historic Environment:
Urban

Historic Function and Use:
Commercial

Known Design Source:
None

REVISIONS.

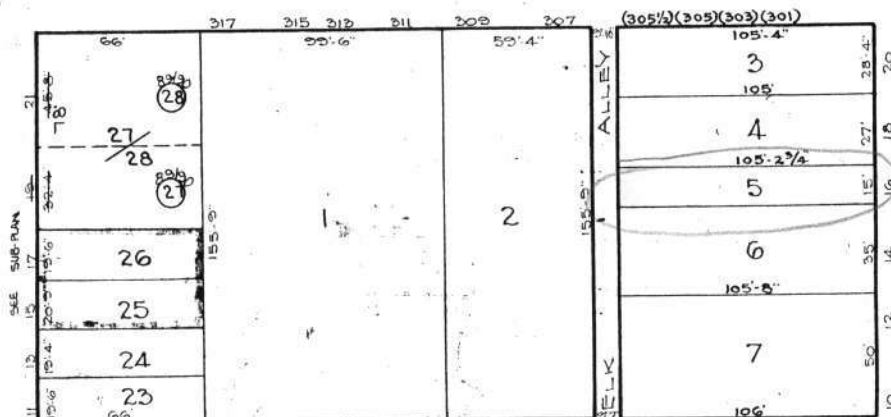
Lots 29, 30, 31, 32 Ass'd in P.S.C. Per BofA, C.S.H. 8729
 Lot 29 N. CHANGED PER FIELD C.S.H. 8720-A
 Lot 31 DIM CHANGED PER DEED C.S.H. 84-2
 LOTS 25 & 26 CORR. PER DEED C.S.H. 87-044
 LOTS 27 & 28 CONSD PER D.O.C.S.H. 80-250

B-4317

W. FAYETTE

ST

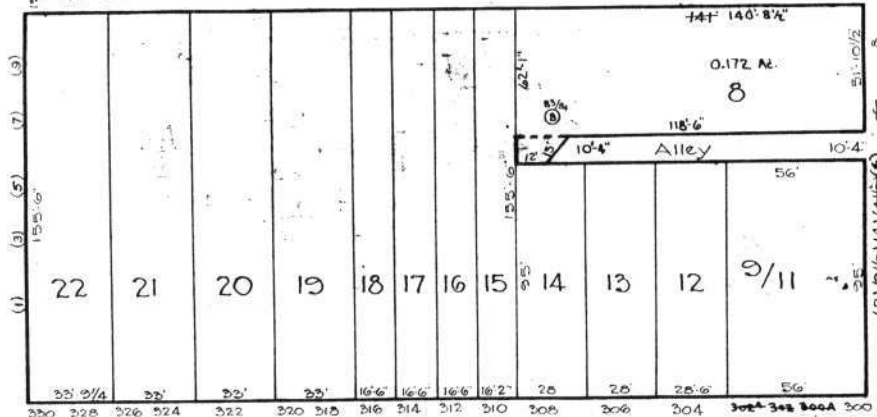
ST



W. FAIRMOUNT

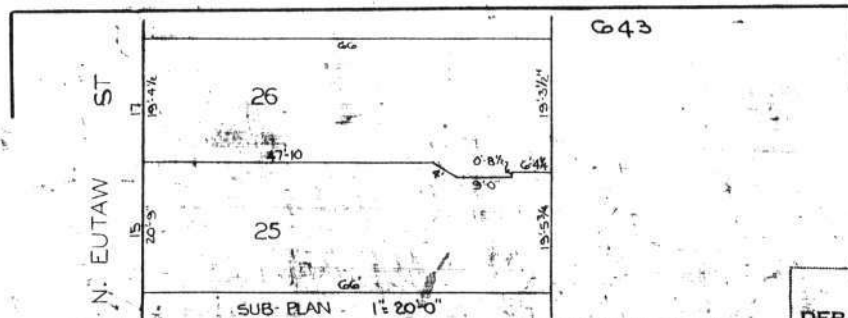
Ave.

N. EUTAW



W. BALTIMORE

ST



CITY OF BALTIMORE
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
 BUREAU OF PLANS & SURVEYS
 PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION

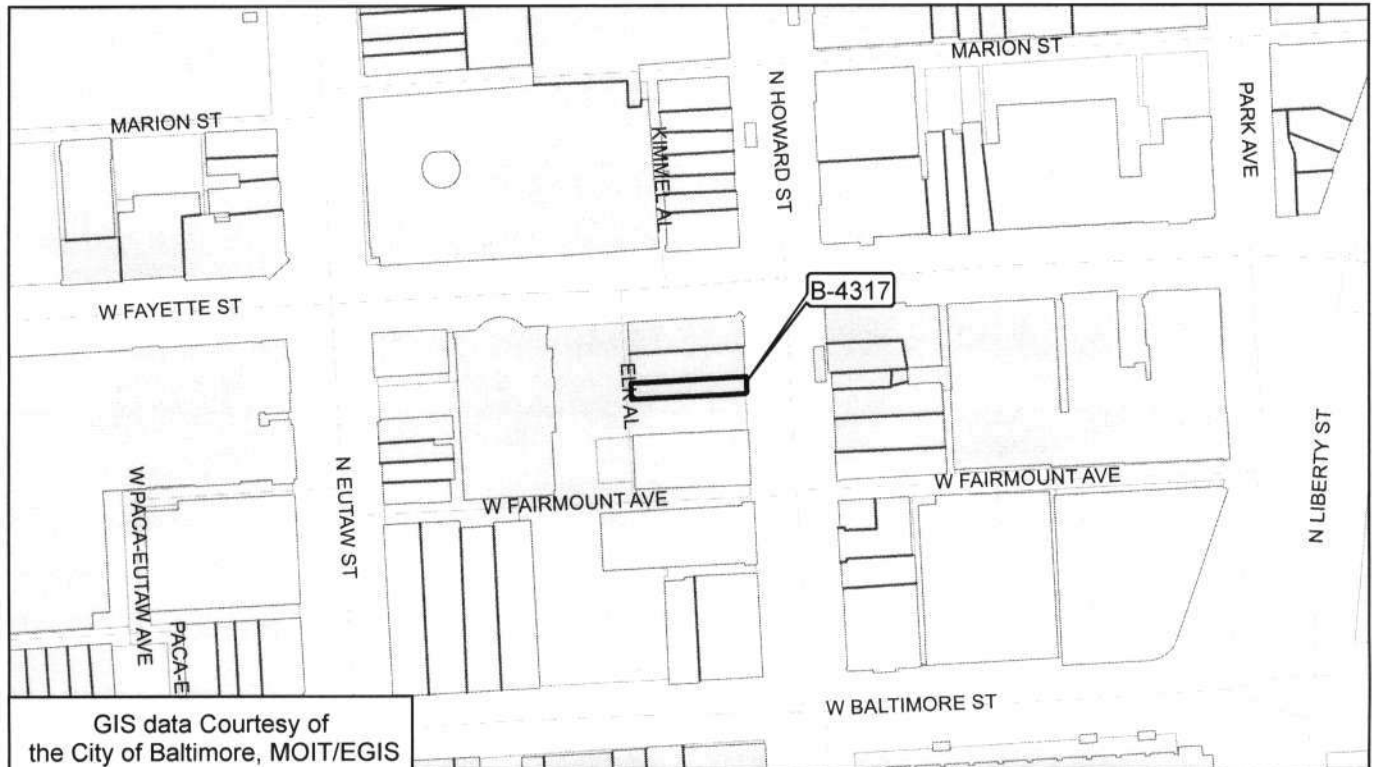
WARD 4 SECTION 10
 BLOCK 632

NOTICE
 THIS IS A REAL PROPERTY PLAT AS PROVIDED
 FOR UNDER ARTICLE 26-41 OF THE CITY CHARTER.
 IT IS COMPILED FROM TITLE AND OTHER
 SOURCES AND IS NOT AN AUTHENTIC SURVEY.

DRAWN BY Moorehead

ENTERED BY W.M.L.22

B-4317
Berman's Diamonds
16 N. Howard Street
Block 0632, Lot 001 (Formerly lot 005)
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.





B-4317

16 N. Howard St.

Baltimore MD

Diane Shaw

8/91

Maryland SHPO

Facade, east elevation

1/1